

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-28 are currently pending in this application. Claims 11 and 14 are hereby amended.

II. THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, claims 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention. Per the Examiner's suggestion, claims 11 and 14 have been amended to replace the term "sleeve" with the term "drum" to properly provide an antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

III. THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-12, 14-23 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,695,031 to Kurita et al. ("Kurita"). The rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

As recited in independent claim 1, the instant invention is directed to *inter alia*:

"A conveyor idler including . . .

a locking mechanism for preventing the drum from rotating in a reverse direction but which locking mechanism permits rotation of the drum in the forward direction, the locking mechanism having at least one wedging surface fixed directly or indirectly to the drum, and a locking member interposed between the wedging surface and the shaft, the locking member being rotatable about the shaft when the drum rotates in the forward direction, but when an attempt is made to

rotate the drum in the reverse direction the locking member becomes releasably wedged between the wedging surface and the shaft, or a surface fixed to the shaft, thereby preventing the drum from rotating in the reverse direction.” (Emphasis added).

The relied upon portions of Kurita do not appear to teach or disclose the above identified feature of claim 1. Specifically, Kurita does not teach or disclose “a locking mechanism for preventing the drum from rotating in a reverse direction.”

Kurita includes rolling elements 9 located in a wedge-like space which serve to transmit rotation between the outer ring 4 and the inner ring 5. When the rolling elements 9 move towards the wider ends of the wedge like spaces 8, the clutch disengages allowing the shaft to freewheel relative to the pulley. This is set out clearly in column 3, lines 19-32 of Kurita. Kurita is not at all concerned with locking a conveyor idler to prevent the conveyor idler from moving in the reverse direction.

In contrast, the present invention includes rollers 38 movable within the end cap 14. However, these rollers act in exactly the opposite manner of the rollers in Kurita. Specifically, when the rollers are located in the wider portion of the space the conveyor is able to rotate, as in Fig. 9, while when the rollers 38 are engaged with the wall of the end cap 14, locking occurs and rotation is prevented.

Put another way, the rolling elements 9 of Kurita are used to *transmit* movement between outer and inner rings while the rolling elements 8 of the present invention are used to *prevent* movement. Thus Kurita does not at all disclose a locking mechanism for preventing the drum from rotating in a reverse direction.

This is clearly set out in claim 1 of the present invention which includes elements “a locking mechanism for preventing the drum from rotating in a reverse direction” and

“but when an attempt is made to rotate the drum in the reverse direction the locking member becomes releasably wedged between the wedging surface and the shaft, or a surface fixed to the shaft, thereby preventing the drum from rotating in the reverse direction.” These elements are not disclosed in Kurita and embody the difference explained above.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that independent claim 1 is patentable over the relied upon portions of Kurita. For reasons similar to those described above, claims 16 and 25 are also believed to be patentable.

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims are dependent from independent claims 1, 16, and 25, discussed above, and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable over the prior art, and an early and favorable consideration thereof is solicited.

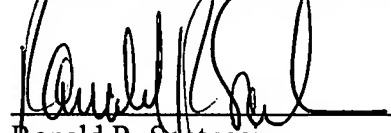
Statements appearing above with respect to the disclosures in the cited references represent the present opinions of the Applicants' undersigned attorney and, in the event that the Examiner disagrees with any such opinions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the respective reference providing the basis for a contrary view.

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Respectfully submitted,
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